

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in this application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) An indwelling stent formed in a substantially tubular shape, having a diameter allowing for insertion into a living organism and expandable when radially outward forces are exerted thereon from the inside of the tubular shape, wherein said stent comprises annular units arranged in an axial direction of said stent, each of said annular units comprises a plurality of collapsed annular elements so arranged as to surround the stent axis, each of said annular elements is elongate in the axial direction of said stent and has an opening in a central portion thereof, adjacent portions of said annular elements are joined to each other through a joint, adjacent annular units being interconnected at said joints by at least one link, said annular elements in each said annular unit are so arranged that one of each adjacent pair of said annular elements is axially offset in the axial direction of said stent relative to the other annular element of the adjacent pair of annular elements, end portions of each said annular unit are projected zigzag, said zigzag projected end portion of said annular unit is in the state of penetrating into the adjacent annular unit, and said joints in each said annular unit are substantially parallel to the stent axis, wherein two or more of said links are provided between an adjacent pair of said annular units.

2. (Original) The indwelling stent according to claim 1, which comprises at least two annular units in the axial direction thereof.

3. (Original) The indwelling stent according to claim 1, wherein said annular unit comprises at least four annular elements.

4. (Original) The indwelling stent according to claim 1, wherein said link is substantially parallel to stent axis.

5. (Original) The indwelling stent according to claim 1, further comprising a radiopaque material-made marker.

6. (Currently Amended) The indwelling stent according to claim 4 8, wherein two or more said links are provided between an adjacent pair of said annular units.

7. (Original) The indwelling stent according to claim 1, wherein each said link is so disposed as not to be continuous with the adjacent link.

8. (Currently Amended) The An indwelling stent according to claim 1, formed in a substantially tubular shape, having a diameter allowing for insertion into a living organism and expandable when radially outward forces are exerted thereon from the inside of the tubular shape, wherein said stent comprises annular units arranged in an axial direction of said stent, each of said annular units comprises a

plurality of collapsed annular elements so arranged as to surround the stent axis,
each of said annular elements is elongate in the axial direction of said stent and has
an opening in a central portion thereof, adjacent portions of said annular elements
are joined to each other through a joint, adjacent annular units being interconnected
at said joints by at least one link, said annular elements in each said annular unit are
so arranged that one of each adjacent pair of said annular elements is axially offset
in the axial direction of said stent relative to the other annular element of the
adjacent pair of annular elements, end portions of each said annular unit are
projected zigzag, said zigzag projected end portion of said annular unit is in the state
of penetrating into the adjacent annular unit, and said joints in each said annular unit
are substantially parallel to the stent axis, wherein said annular elements are aligned
substantially rectilinearly with respect to the axial direction of said stent.

9. (Original) The indwelling stent according to claim 1, wherein said annular elements are not aligned substantially rectilinearly with respect to the axial direction of said stent.

10. (Original) The indwelling stent according to claim 1, wherein an end portion, located on the outer side, of each of said annular elements located at both ends of said stent is roughly semi-elliptic in shape.

11. (Original) The indwelling stent according to claim 1, which has been produced with a predetermined outside diameter by use of a plastically deformable material-made pipe and then reduced in diameter by compressing from outside.

12. (Currently Amended) A living organ dilator comprising a tubular shaft main body, a foldable and expandable balloon provided at a distal end portion of said shaft main body, and a stent so mounted as to envelop said balloon in a folded state and expandable by expanding said balloon,
wherein said stent is an indwelling stent formed in a substantially tubular shape, having a diameter allowing for insertion into a living organism and expandable when radially outward forces are exerted thereon from the inside of the tubular shape, and said stent comprises annular units arranged in an axial direction of said stent, each of said annular units comprises a plurality of collapsed annular elements so arranged as to surround the stent axis, each of said annular elements is elongate in the axial direction of said stent and has an opening in a central portion thereof, adjacent portions of said annular elements are joined to each other through a joint, adjacent annular units being interconnected at said joints by at least one link, said annular elements in each said annular unit are so arranged that one of each adjacent pair of said annular elements is axially offset in the axial direction of said stent relative to the other annular element of the adjacent pair of annular elements, end portions of each said annular unit are projected zigzag, said zigzag projected end portion of said annular unit is in the state of penetrating into the adjacent annular unit, and said joints in each said annular unit are substantially parallel to the stent axis, wherein two or more of said links are provided between an adjacent pair of said annular units.

13. (Original) The living organ dilator according to claim 12, wherein said stent has been produced with a predetermined outside diameter by use of a

plastically deformable material-made pipe, then said balloon has been disposed inside said stent, and thereafter said stent has been reduced in diameter by compressing from outside so as to mount said stent on said balloon.

14. (Original) The living organ dilator according to claim 12, wherein said annular unit of said stent comprises at least four annular elements.

15. (Original) The living organ dilator according to claim 12, wherein said link of said stent is substantially parallel to the stent axis.

16. (Original) The living organ dilator according to claim 12, wherein said stent has a radiopaque material-made marker.

17. (Original) The living organ dilator according to claim 12, wherein each said link of said stent is so disposed as not to be continuous with the adjacent link.

18. (Currently Amended) An indwelling stent formed in a substantially tubular shape, having a diameter allowing for insertion into a living organism and expandable when radially outward forces are exerted thereon from the inside of the tubular shape, said stent comprising annular units arranged in an axial direction of said stent, each of said annular units comprising a plurality of collapsed annular elements so arranged as to surround the stent axis, each of said annular elements being elongate in the axial direction of said stent and possessing an opening in a central portion thereof, adjacent portions of said annular elements in each of said

annular units being joined to each other through a joint, with at least one link interconnecting adjacent annular units each adjacent pair of annular units being interconnected by at least two links, the at least one link being connected to one of the joints connecting adjacent annular elements in one annular unit and one of the joints connecting adjacent annular elements in an adjacent annular unit, said annular elements in each annular unit being so arranged that one of the annular elements of each adjacent pair of said annular elements is axially offset in the axial direction of said stent relative to the other annular element of the adjacent pair of annular elements, the adjacent annular units being positioned relative to one another such that an end portion of each of a plurality of annular elements in one annular unit is positioned between end portions of two annular elements of the adjacent annular unit, and said joints in each of said annular units being substantially parallel to the stent axis.

19. (Previously Presented) The indwelling stent according to claim 18, wherein the link connecting first and second adjacent annular units is circumferentially shifted relative to the link connecting second and third adjacent annular units.

20. (Canceled)